

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMCONSUL FUKUOKA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMCONSUL MEDAN
AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE
AMCONSUL PERTH
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMCONSUL SURABAYA
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UNCLAS HONG KONG 14955

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SUBJECT: AGENDA FOR EAST ASIA COMMERCIAL OFFICERS CONFERENCE

REF: SINGAPORE 5748
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1. BEFORE WE BEAT OUR BREASTS TOO MUCH ABOUT ANY ALLEGED
SLIGHTING OF APCAC'S FEELINGS, ADDRESSEES MIGHT BE
INTERESTED IN HONG KONG AMERICAN CHAMBER'S VIEW. THEY
RECALL THAT TONY GEBER GAVE APCAC A HEARING AT JAKARTA
AND TRIED TO ENGAGE THEM IN RATIONAL DISCUSSION, BUT

RECEIVED LITTLE RATIONALITY OR COURTESY IN RETURN. HONG KONG CHAMBER OFFICERS WHO ATTENDED JAKARTA MEETING REPORTED ON THEIR RETURN THEIR DISTRESS AND EMBASSASSMENT AT THE WAY GEBER WAS TREATED AND THEIR HIGH ADMIRATION FOR THE WAY HE CONDUCTED HIMSELF UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES. CONSENSUS OF LOCAL APCAC COMMITTEE IS THAT THEY WOULD BE SURPRISED IF USG EVER SENT ANOTHER REPRESENTATIVE TO AN APCAC MEETING.

2. ABOVE IS NOT TO SUGGEST WE CUT OFF APCAC OUT OF SPITE, BUT MERELY TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT. MORE SERIOUS QUESTION WE SHOULD CONSIDER IN DECIDING AGENDA FOR COMMERCIAL OFFICERS CONFERENCE IS WHETHER APCAC SERVES A USEFUL ROLE AND HOW LONG ITS MEMBERS WILL ALLOW IT TO SERVE ANY ROLE AT ALL. THE HONG KONG CHAMBER BELIEVES APCAC'S FEBRUARY MEETING IN BANGKOK MAY WELL BE ITS LAST. IN ADDITION TO THE CONSIDERABLE DISENCHANTMENT WITH APCAC HERE OVER PASSAGE AT THE JAKARTA MEETING OF THE CONTROVERSIAL CHINA RESOLUTION, THERE IS DISSATISFACTION BOTH HERE AND IN THE TOKYO CHAMBER AS WELL OVER WHETHER APCAC IS WORTH THEY MONEY IT COSTS. HONG KONG CHAMBER BELIEVES (AND HOPES) THAT DEBATE IN BANGKOK ON APCAC POLITICIZATION AND LACK OF COST/EFFECTIVENESS WILL COMBINE TO DESTROY THE ORGANIZATION.

3. THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY DESERVES OUR FULL SUPPORT AND COOPERATION. APCAC AS AN ORGANIZATION DESERVES NOTHING EXCEPT INsofar AS IT CAN DEMONSTRATE IT SPEAKS FOR THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY OR SERVES SOME DEMONSTRABLE NATIONAL INTERESTS. WE FRANKLY WONDER IF UNCLASSIFIED

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IT DOES EITHER. WE, NEVERTHELESS, HAVE NO OBJECTION TO CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS MEETING WITH APCAC AS LONG AS WE KEEP IN MIND THAT WE ARE NOT MEETING WITH THE "BUSINESS COMMUNITY" BUT WITH AN ORGANIZATION WHICH MAY NOT REPRESENT ANYTHING MORE THAN THE VIEWS OF ITS OFFICERS AND WHICH MAY NOT SURVIVE ITS NEXT GENERAL MEETING. NO-HOST LUNCHEON STRIKES US AS APPROPRIATE AND SUFFICIENT. IN PLACE OF THE FORMAL SESSION WITH APCAC, HOWEVER, RECOMMEND CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS SPEND THAT TIME DISCUSSIN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN USG AND OVERSEAS BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND HOW WE MIGHT BUILD ON THE ALREADY CLOSE COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP THAT EXISTS BETWEEN MISSIONS AND LOCAL CHAMBERS. DISCUSSION WOULD, OF COURSE, INCLUDE WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, APCAC OR SIMILAR ORGANIZATION HAS OR COULD HAVE IN THIS PROCESS. CROSS

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